



▶ [HOME](#) ▶ [GET LOCAL](#) ▶ [NEWS](#) ▶ [OPINION](#) ▶ [BUSINESS](#) ▶ [SPORTS](#) ▶ [WEATHER](#) ▶ [LIFESTYLE](#) ▶ [ENTERTAINMENT](#)

ventura

- [Community Info](#)
- [Internet Community](#)
- [Forums](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Obituaries](#)



VENTURA ALLIANCE:
Smog Check

BALLET ACADEMY VENTURA:
Ballet three years old to adult

DR. JOHN COLLETT:
Foot and Ankle Care

DR. BRIAN SANTINI:
Accepting New Patients

COMPREHENSIVE ACUPUNCTURE:
For nagging health concerns

[More Advertisers »](#)
[Place an Ad »](#)

Local News:

- [CAMARILLO](#)
- [CONEJO VALLEY](#)
- [FILLMORE](#)
- [MOORPARK](#)
- [OJAI](#)
- [OXNARD](#)
- [PORT HUENEME](#)
- [SANTA PAULA](#)
- [SIMI VALLEY](#)
- [VENTURA](#)

[PRINT THIS STORY](#) | [E-MAIL THIS STORY](#)

District draws attention with eating program

USDA undersecretary visits

By Marjorie Hernandez,
mhernandez@VenturaCountyStar.com
October 15, 2003

The hip-hop beat from a boombox filled Logan Culp's fifth-grade classroom at E.P. Foster School in Ventura on Tuesday afternoon as 12 rappers and dancers transformed it into a venue for a midday impromptu concert.

The student rappers, members of the fifth-grade class, didn't do the typical rap fare. Instead, they rhymed phrases about the importance of eating vegetables and fruits in a song called "Five A Day."



Matt McClain / Star staff

Eric Bost, U.S. Department of Agriculture undersecretary, gives high fives to fifth-graders Tuesday at E.P. Foster School in Ventura.



Advertisement

Local Dealers

New Car Quote

Shop By Price

Shop By Payment

"Droppin' the knowledge on how to make your body ignite," the students rapped in unison and waved their hands. "Eat your five a day and you're doin' it right."

They demonstrated the fruits of their labor and knowledge to U.S. Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Eric Bost, who visited E.P. Foster in his only West Coast stop, where he presented a certificate of recognition for Ventura Unified's Healthy Schools project. His tour also kicked off National School Lunch Week, Oct. 13 to 17.

"I came here because of the real focus that the school has demonstrated in terms of the Farm to School Program ... very important because it goes a long way toward getting fresh fruits and vegetables into the mouths of children," Bost said as he sat down for lunch in the campus lunch area. "Small schools like this don't garner the positive attention as they should ... and they need it because they are doing a really good job."

Ventura Unified's Healthy Schools project, launched about two years ago, focuses on three components, including the implementation of "Farm to School" salad bars, classroom and nutrition education and garden-based learning.

So far, nine elementary schools in the Ventura Unified School District have participated in the project. The goal is to involve all 17 elementary schools by the end of the school year, Superintendent Trudy Arriaga said.

"Our goal is for all children to take the knowledge and take that into the world," Arriaga said. "If we can teach children healthy eating, then they can transfer that over into their own lives."

A recent report compiled by Gold Coast Health Collaborative found that a quarter of children in Ventura, Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties are overweight. About one-third of fifth-, seventh- and ninth-graders could not pass the basic fitness test.

To combat the problem, county officials took on the concept of infusing classroom education with practical experience. Some of the nine schools have gardens where students grow their own fruits and vegetables.

The program also gives local farmers with small farms an opportunity to sell their fruits and vegetables to the schools and also drum up support from the community, said Marilyn Godfrey, Healthy Schools project coordinator for Ventura Unified.

Farmers visit classrooms and talk about the crops they grow, while the children take field trips to farms in Santa Paula, Moorpark and Ventura.

The changes were evident at E.P. Foster School as Bost joined school district administrators on a tour around the school garden and classrooms, where third-graders cooked bell-pepper quesadillas and preschoolers blended fresh-fruit smoothies.

"There's a real focus and emphasis on nutrition and exposing children to a healthy lifestyle and healthy choices," Bost said as he finished his three-hour tour. "That's something that is very important to me personally and the (Bush) administration. They have done just an absolutely wonderful job."

Discover the soul of America
on a cross-country RV journey...

